REMARKS

I. Status of the Application

At the time of the Action, Claims 29-46 were pending. Claims 41-46 have been canceled above. Claims 29, 33, 35 and 36 stand rejected under Sections 102(b) and 102(e). All pending claims stand rejected under Section 103(a) and under the doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting. These rejections are addressed below.

II. The Rejections of Claim 29 and Claims Dependent Therefrom

The Action rejects independent Claim 29 under Section 102(e) based on U.S. Patent No. 6,443,236 to Saito (Saito) and under Section 102(b) based on Japanese Patent No. 11,171,323 (Saito JP).[1] The Action states that Saito includes all of the elements of Claim 29; more specifically, the Action cites an "exit channel" (component 4b/4d in Saito) having a "forwardly directed jet aperture" (which appears to be labeled at 4e in Figure 1 of Saito) and a "rearwardly-directed aperture" 2d, and further cites first and second pressure sources connected to the jet apertures via "tube connection tools" TC. Based on these characterizations of Saito, the Action concludes that Saito anticipates Claim 29.

In responding to Applicants' arguments in Applicants' paper dated January 18, 2007, the Action states that:

> the requirement is for the exit channel to PERMIT passage of a single article at a time the limitation of which would be satisfied with a passage permitting a minimum of a single article at that time as well as a plurality of articles at a time. There is no language in the claimed proscribing a maximum cross-section limit.
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> However, a maximum claim limit could even be met with a single chokepoint rather than a cross-section throughout the channel that has a maximum cross-sectional diameter. A narrow cross-section of the downstream portion as in the Saito et al

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[1] The Action states that Saito JP is the Japanese language equivalent to Saito. Without conceding this point, for the purposes of this response Applicants' arguments assume Saito JP is identical to Saito and address the English version (Saito) for simplicity.

> references limits the exit channel to a maximum of a single article at a plurality of locations including the exit.

In response, Applicants note that Claim 29 has been amended to recite, in pertinent part:

> an exit channel fluidly connected to the housing at an entry end, and the entry end of the exit channel being configured in cross-section to permit the passage of only a single article at a time, the exit channel including a forwardly-directed jet aperture and a rearwardly directed jet aperture . . .

Thus, the forwardly-directed jet aperture and the rearwardly-directed jet aperture are included in the exit channel downstream of the entry end, which entry end is configured in cross-section to permit the passage of only a single article at a time. Saito does not meet this recitation, as the vent hole 2d identified in the Action as being a "rearwardly-directed jet aperture" is connected with the storage chamber 2a (which is configured to hold therein multiple articles at once as opposed to a single article as recited in Claim 29) rather than with the liner passage 4b. As such, the storage chamber 2a cannot serve as part of the "exit channel" because its "entry end" (the top end of the storage chamber 2a) is configured to permit the passage of many articles. Accordingly, Saito cannot anticipate Claim 29, and Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Applicants further submit that Claim 29 is free of the art of record under Section 103(a). As discussed in Applicants' paper dated January 18th, 2007, the Action combines six different secondary references with Saito in rejecting Claim 29 and claims that depend therefrom; however, none of these references discloses a rearwardly-directed jet aperture included in the exit channel. U.S. Patent No. 4,223,751 to Ayers et al (Ayers) discloses a system in which a compressed air source forces air through passages 32 in a forward direction. U.S. Patent No. 6,039,512 to Chooi et al (Chooi) discloses a system that has a conduit 18 that is forwardly directed relative to the passage 4 and another conduit 19 that is substantially perpendicular to the passage 4. A rearwardly-directed conduit 17 directs air into the hopper 2 rather than to the passage 4. U.S. Patent No. 6,116,821 to Teoh et al (Teoh) discloses a device that is similar to that of Chooi, but without the conduit 19. U.S. Patent No. 4,953,749 to Kubota et al (Kubota) discloses a device for separating electronic chips, and in Figures 4(a) and 4(b) illustrates a chip alignment hole 4 that connects to two air ejection ports 5, 14 that are perpendicular to the chip alignment hole 4. Another air ejection port (also designated at 5) connects the other two air ejection ports 5, 14 rather than connecting to the chip alignment hole 4. Thus, Kubota also fails to disclose an exit channel with a rearwardly-directed jet aperture. U.S. Patent No. 5,725,160 to Harper et al. (Harper) discloses a wood chip blower that has no "exit channel" configured to permit the passage of a single article at a time, and is cited in the Action only for the disclosure of the use of a pressure within a range of 1 to 500 psi. U.S. Patent No. 4,769,904 to Porterfield et al. (Porterfield) discloses a device for handling electronics chips, but has no rearwardly-directed jet aperture and is cited in the Action only for the pressure range of 1 to 500 psi.

Inasmuch as none of the secondary references discloses a rearwardly-directed jet aperture that is included in the exit channel with the exit channel having an entry end that is configured to permit the passage of only a single article at a time, none of the secondary references overcome the deficiencies of Saito. Consequently, Applicants respectfully submit that it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in this art to conceive the recited subject matter based on the references of record, and respectfully requests that the rejections of Claim 29 and claims dependent therefrom be withdrawn.

III. **The Double Patenting Rejection**

The Action rejects all of the pending claims under the judicially created doctrine of double patenting based on U.S. Patent No. 6,631,826 (the parent to this continuation application). Applicants submit herewith an executed Terminal Disclaimer that obviates this rejection.

IV. **Conclusion**

Inasmuch as all of the outstanding issues raised in the Action have been addressed, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance, and requests that it be passed to allowance and issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATION OF TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted via the Office electronic filing system in accordance with § 1.6(a)(4) to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on July 23, 2007.

Signature: Joyce Paoli
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